THE DICKENSIAN

A Magazine for Dickens Lovers
and Monthly Record of the Dickens Fellowship

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WHEN FOUND—

IT has now been definitely arranged that the unveiling of the Tablets which are to be fixed upon the Dickens houses in Broadstairs will take place on June 20th, the occasion of the Dickens Fellowship Summer Festival there. This should make the trip an important and successful one, and it is hoped that those intending to join the party will communicate with the Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. W. T. Ley, Whitcomb House, Whitcomb Street, W.C., at the earliest convenience, in order that the necessary arrangements may be made, for the price of tickets, &c., will depend on the number who take part in the Festival.

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So far the following arrangements have been made:—The party will start from Victoria Station by train, arriving at Broadstairs at about 11 o'clock. At the station a deputation from the Isle of Thanet Branch will meet the train, and the party will proceed to the unveiling of the Tablets, and be conducted to the other various Dickensian spots of interest. Luncheon will be taken at 1.30. By permission of the owner, Bleak House and grounds will be open to members at 2.30, and the party will be photographed in the gardens. Tea will be taken at 5 o'clock, and a concert provided in the public grounds. The price of tickets, including travelling, lunch, and tea, will not be more than 10s., and less if the party is large enough to enable special prices to be charged by the railway. Further details will be given in next month's issue.

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The fame of our Dickens reciters is spreading fast in America and Canada, and we are glad to learn that Mr. William Miles has started on a recital tour through that continent. He sailed from Liverpool in the s.s. "Virginian," for Montreal, on April 24th, and is due to reach the city on May 3rd. In addition to his Dickensian recitals, he intends to give his famous Shakesperian and historical ones, and we have no doubt of the reception his remarkable elocutionary powers will bring him. He has already many engagements booked in connection with Literary Institutions and branches of the Fellowship, amongst which are Toronto, Ottawa, and Hamilton. From Canada he goes to the United States, where he is sure to meet with the success he deserves.

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Mr. Miles's repertoire is a large one, including eleven of Shakespeare's plays, three separate Dickens recitals, and Scott's "Ivanhoe," so that he should be able to please all tastes. Mr. Miles's reputation in this country is of long standing, and there is scarcely an impor-

tant town here that his fame has not reached. Only last year we mentioned the fact that he gave his twenty-fifth consecutive annual recital at the Bradford Mechanics' Institute, when he was presented with a gold medal, to mark the city's appreciation of the unique event. On that occasion he recited *Dombey and Son* to a large audience, and on page 131 we give an interesting picture of the assembly, reproduced from a flashlight photograph. All Dickensians will join us in wishing Mr. Miles a safe voyage, an enjoyable trip, and a successful tour.

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An interesting tour to Alpine Dickens-land is being arranged by Mr. Robert Allbut, Hon. Secretary of the Brixton Branch, and Mr. Arthur Humphreys, Hon. Secretary of the Manchester Branch. The party will leave London on July 14th for Territet, at the head of the Lake of Geneva. Visits will be paid to the house in Lausanne where the earlier parts of *Dombey and Son* were written, also to the Castle of Chillon, the St. Bernard Hospice, Chamonix, and other places of Dickensian interest. The inclusive cost for the fortnight's tour, with full particulars, may be obtained on application to Mr. Allbut, at 14, Fairmount Road, Brixton, S.W., or Mr. Arthur Humphreys, Olinda, Longsight, Manchester.

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A little time ago some members of the Sheffield Branch of the Fellowship started a "Dickens Social Club," membership of which is confined and limited to thirty members of the Fellowship, each of whom shall adopt a Dickensian name. The character of the club is essentially literary, but there seems to be a tacit understanding that this shall be tempered with conviviality and sociability, and a fixed determination on the part of members to thoroughly enjoy themselves. At the last meeting Mr. Archie Waite read a paper on "The Humour of Sam Weller," and Mr. T. W. Padmore one on the "Fame of Charles Dickens." We wish them every success and give them Dick Swiveller's toast: "May the wing of friendship never moult a feather."

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The Kennington Theatre announce a special attraction for Whit week of a dramatic version of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, in four acts. The following characters will be represented by a strong caste of Dickens actors:—Little Nell and her grandfather, Dick Swiveller, The Marchioness, Kit, Quilp, Mrs. Quilp, Sampson and Sally Brass. The play will be preceded by a one-act piece entitled "Dolly Varden." Full particulars will be given in our next issue.

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Another edition of Dickens's works has just been issued by Messrs. Chapman & Hall and Henry Frowde. It is pocket size, printed in good readable type, and fully illustrated with all the original illustrations. The edition is complete in twenty volumes, and will be known as the "Eighteenpenny Illustrated Dickens." The cloth volumes are published at one shilling and sixpence, and the leather ones at two shillings and sixpence.

THE EDITOR.

THE NATIONAL DICKENS LIBRARY

By J. W. T. LEY

I

EARLY MAGAZINE ARTICLES

I HAVE been asked to act as a guide to a kind of "conducted tour" through the National Dickens Library which is now housed in the Guildhall of the City of London. In necessarily limited space I can do no more than take a mere glance at some of the treasures of this collection, which stands as a memorial not only to the most popular and beloved novelist, but also to the most painstaking and one of the most beloved students of that novelist —Frederic G. Kitton. The comprehensiveness, interest, and value of the Library cannot be appreciated or realised in a glance any more than beer can be tasted in a sip, or the American can "see Yurrup" in a week, but I will do my best, and I fancy I shall at least succeed in convincing any doubters that may exist of its value.

There are two features which will probably first commend themselves to the average visitor—the extensive collection of magazine articles, and the unique series of portraits of the novelist. Of the portraits more may be said later; and it is proposed to run casually through the seventeen volumes which contain the 1,500 or so magazine articles, skipping a volume perhaps on occasion, or now and then reading an extract which seems to be of special interest.

With what reception did Dickens meet when he first burst upon the world with all the glory, not of a rising sun, but of a sun at its full meridian? An unnecessary question, perhaps. Have we not heard and read many times over how the world received him with a welcome the equal of which it has never given to any other writer, and how the pages of the "Quarterly Review" were as the voice of one crying in the wilderness? True, it is an oft-told tale, and yet is it not of deep interest to the Dickensian to turn to the Press of the time and to read there the very words of welcome, criticism, and advice with which the wonderful young reporter was greeted?

And so I turn to the earliest article I can find in this collection. It is from the *Court Magazine*, is dated April, 1837, and its title is "Some Thoughts on Arch-Waggery, and, in especial, on the Genius of 'Boz.'" The writer is facetious in commenting upon the "sudden turn for comic which has recently discovered itself in the literary public," and he debates whether this is good for the constitution, physical and social, or for the morals of the people—it occurs to him as possible that the people will get so fat by the force of laughing "that they will insensibly become better conducted in the streets, and in all public places, owing to the abatement of that corporeal agility to which so many of the freaks and misdemeanours that at present occupy the attention of all public magistrates may be attributed"—and if that should be the case, then "the cultivation of fun will only tend to make the people serious," thus foiling itself in the end. And this extraordinary state of affairs, with all its possibilities, has been occasioned by "a facetious gentleman who, for some months, escaped detection under the name of 'Boz,'" but

who is now known to be "a young gentleman rejoicing in the name of Charles Dickens, Esq." This is quite a short article, but I dwell upon it for the reason that it is striking to find in the earliest in the collection that the writer's estimate of "Boz" is one that has been confirmed by the judgment of three generations—I say striking, because it must be borne in mind that this critic is speaking with only the complete *Sketches by Boz* and ten or eleven numbers of *Pickwick* before him. He refers to the verisimilitude of these writings, and he says:—"They reflect the manners to which they are addressed with a felicity that is unimpeachable for truth. Read one of those pages, and your imagination instantly transports you to the spot—the figures he describes are before you—their voices are in your ears—the very turn of their grimace, their attitudes, their peculiarities, are present to you. . . . *He catches the essential and striking feature at once, and embodies it in a few touches that will survive the races they describe.*" The italics are my own. It has been said and written very often indeed, and by some of our most reputable critics, that the *Sketches by Boz* really contain no special merit at all, that really they are only excellent examples of newspaper sketches, or "specials"; that they do not, in sober truth, contain any foretaste of the genius which was to appear in *Oliver Twist*, &c.; and that we only read this into them because we have the fuller knowledge from which our attempts to estimate the *Sketches* cannot be separated. This is such a plausible argument that it seems to be almost unanswerable, and so it will be understood why one is inclined to place special emphasis on the opinion of this anonymous writer in the *Court Magazine* exactly seventy-one years ago, for these remarks refer emphatically to the *Sketches by Boz*, his illustrations, which of course cannot be quoted here, being taken from that book.

Let us turn over a page. We find an article from the *Edinburgh Review*, and our attention is arrested at once, for we recall that one of the novelist's earliest and most loved friends edited that *Review*—the famous Lord Jeffery, who pleaded with Dickens to allow Little Nell to live, whose eulogium on the *Carol* is so well known. Who wrote this article there is no means of knowing, but one would like to think that it was Jeffery himself. "We think (Mr. Dickens) a very original writer—well entitled to his popularity—and not likely to lose it—the truest and most spirited delineator of English life amongst the middle and lower classes since the days of Smollett and Fielding. He has remarkable powers of observation and great skill in communicating what he has observed—a keen sense of the ludicrous—exuberant humour—and that mastery in the pathetic which, though it seems opposed to the gift of humour, is often found in conjunction with it. Add to these qualities an unaffected style, fluent, easy, spirited, and terse—a good deal of dramatic power—and great truthfulness and ability in description. . . . There is no misanthropy in his satire, and no coarseness in his descriptions—a merit enhanced by the nature of his subjects. . . . One of the qualities we most admire in him is his comprehensive spirit of humanity. The tendency of his writings is to make us practically

benevolent—to excite our sympathy in behalf of the aggrieved and suffering in all classes; and especially in those who are most removed from observation. . . . His humanity is plain, practical, and manly. It is quite untainted with sentimentality." What other comment can we make upon this, after seventy years, than "Thou hast said"? In all the mass of print that has accumulated round the name of Dickens there is not to be found a truer estimate of his genius than this, written, as we are fondly believing, by Jeffery in the year that *Oliver Twist* saw the light.

One hurried glance at the most famous magazine article that has ever been written in relation to Dickens and his works. It is that which appeared in the *Quarterly Review* of October, 1837, and which it has been alleged Dickens had in his mind when he caused one of the dummy book backs on his library door to be lettered "The Quarrelly Review." The anonymous writer has suffered much ridicule and some abuse for what is called his "prophecy." And yet, what after all, did he say? It was qualified with a big "if," as was Mr. Bumble's assertion that "the law is a ass"—there was nothing dogmatic about it, and its truth must be apparent to every one of us to-day. This unhappy writer said no more than that "Mr. Dickens writes too often and too fast," and "IF he persists much longer in this course, it requires no gift of prophecy to foretell his fate—he has risen like a rocket, and he will come down like a stick; but let him give his capacity fair play, and it is rich and vigorous and versatile enough to insure him a high and enduring reputation." Some of the criticisms in the article will scarcely strike most readers of this magazine as inspired, but it is the concluding paragraph which I have just quoted that has brought down such obloquy on its unhappy writer. And yet, if we turn to Forster's "Life of Dickens," and inquire what work Dickens was doing in 1837-1838, we shall see that he *was* writing too often and too fast, and that he had to insist upon being released from some overwhelming engagements.

One more quotation, and I must end for the present. I have just opened Vol. 15, and my attention has been arrested by a review of *Bleak House* from the *Spectator* of September 24th, 1853. Dickens had not attracted all the world to him even in 1853. There were still wanderers in the desert, who, like a pretty well known story writer of to-day, regarded his popularity with amazement. Listen to the *Spectator*:—"If Mr. Dickens were now for the first time before the public, we should have found our space fully occupied in drawing attention to his wit, his invention, his eye for common life, for common men and women, for the everyday aspect of streets and houses, his tendency to delineate the affections and the humours rather than the passions of mankind. . . . As it is, he must be content with the praise of amusing the idle hours of the greatest number of readers; not, we may hope, without improvement to their hearts, but certainly without profoundly affecting their intellects or deeply stirring their emotions. Clever he undoubtedly is: many of his portraits excite pity, and suggest the existence of the crying social sins; but of almost all we are obliged

to say that they border on and frequently reach caricature, of which the essence is to catch a striking likeness by exclusively selecting and exaggerating a peculiarity that marks the man but does not represent him."

The favourite remark of a character in a recent production of the Fellowship Dramatic Society comes to the lips on reading this—"Ho! good gracious!" So, even so late as 1853, the only praise that Dickens was worthy of was that of having amused the idle hours of the greatest number. One cannot help the feeling as he reads this paragraph that perhaps the writer scarcely realised that even this is an achievement which might qualify a man for national honour! No deep stirring of the emotions! Note that we are bound to assume that the writer was acquainted with Smike, Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim, Paul Dombey, David Copperfield and his mother, Little Em'ly, &c.; and yet he calmly tells us that Dickens did not deeply stir the emotions! We have most of us heard before that Dickens was only a caricaturist, and probably this was not the earliest appearance of that criticism. In any case, it is gratifying to know that the *Spectator* was ready to admit that he was "clever," though we may be forgiven if we again quote the character referred to just now, and say, "Oh! don't relude to that, mim."

COMPETITION FOR DICKENSIANS

WE set as a competition this month an examination paper in *Hard Times*. Answers, together with an entrance fee of sixpence, must reach the Editor, 11, Henrietta St., Covent Garden, W.C., marked on envelope "Hard Times," not later than June 13th. This extended time is given at the request of subscribers abroad who desire to compete. All answers must be written on one side only of foolscap paper. Two prizes of books will be given. The first to the value of 7s. 6d., and the second 3s. 6d.

HARD TIMES.

1. In what ocean do deep-sea divers invariably become insane?
2. Where and when was a lady addressed by a wrong family name?
3. Quote references to (*a*) the Three Christian Graces; (*b*) the Writing on the Wall; (*c*) the Good Samaritan; and (*d*) a reversal of a metaphorical saying of Christ.
4. What propensity did Mrs. Sparsit find it difficult to conquer after the marriage of her employer?
5. Give Tom Gradgrind's terse description of his father's system of education.
6. Quote allusions to Morgiana, Blue Beard, Robinson Crusoe, Yorick, Lord Chesterfield, and Peter Piper.
7. What barriers were insurmountable by Mr. Gradgrind?
8. What was Bitzer's opinion (expressed by two adjectives and statement of negative value) of Tom?
9. Give reference to the familiar proverb in regard to the stolen horse.
10. In what guise besides that of "a roaring lion" does the Devil work mischief?
11. Quote references to (*a*) Charles's Wain; (*b*) the Great Pyramid and the Nile, and (*c*) the Slough of Despond.
12. What is the oldest established weaving factory in existence?

JOE GARGERY'S FORGE

AN interesting article appears in the *Home Counties Magazine* for April on Dickens and Gravesend, by Mr. Alex. J. Philip, and in addition to dealing with the associations of Dickens and his books which exist in connexion with the town, Mr. Philip sets himself the task of making out a rival claim for a cottage at Chalk, where Dickens spent his honeymoon. Hitherto, on the authority of Laman Blanchard, the Manor House was the one. But Mr. Philip supplies local evidence in favour of a cottage on the angle of the upper and lower roads a few yards nearer Gravesend. Perhaps it is of little importance but for the fact that whichever the house was, a part of *Pickwick* was written in it. That alone would make it worth the trouble to decide. We referred to the question and gave a picture of the new claimant on page 48 of our last year's volume.

Mr. Philip has many claims for Gravesend as a Dickensian land-

JOE GARGERY'S FORGE, CHALK

mark, the most notable being that it was Muggleton, and he tells us he is gathering further material to substantiate his assertion. He also makes out an excellent case for the blacksmith's forge at Chalk being the original of Joe Gargery's Forge, and we are able, through the courtesy of the editor of the *Home Counties Magazine*, to give an illustration of it. Hitherto Cooling has been considered the location for this part of *Great Expectations*, but no forge is to be found there, whilst Mr. Philip's discovery coincides with Dickens's description, even to the door communicating with the kitchen. As he says, no doubt Dickens must have seen this when stopping in the village, and must have passed it many times later on his walks to and from Gravesend. The marshes of Denton and Chalk are close at hand, and moreover the smith was well known to Dickens. Altogether, Mr. Philip's article is interesting and valuable, and is likely to stimulate discussion.

THE DANCING ACADEMY

By LEICESTER ROMAYNE

Author of "On Behalf of Mr. Jingle," &c., &c.

AH, the gay little feet that so lightly tripped, the foolish young hearts that beat so wildly but a few score years ago! How brightly the eyes shone, how smiled those red lips, how warmly flushed those rounded girl cheeks with the dance and the music, the lights and the joy of it all! Ah me! ah me! The fiddlers have long stopped playing, sirs, the lights are quenched and the dancers have gone home, and in those rooms that were so full of life there now reigns a great silence. The painted lyres on the wall are faded and discoloured, and the little cut-glass branches for candles have a tawdry worn-out splendour, even as, mayhap, would have to our modern critic eyes those small past-day dancers themselves (so, alas, are we fashioned!) could they trip in at the door once again in their antique finery, and resume their long-finished paces to the music of a ghostly fiddle. Would the ladies among you ever stop at jesting on those quaint poke bonnets hung upon the hooks, on the artificial flowers that deck the maidens' tresses, on the pink silk stockings—oh, fie!—on all your great-grandmothers' get-up from tip to toe? But there! fresh young cheeks are never out of fashion, and young eyes flash the same, whichever George is on the throne, and Mr. Turvey-drop the third, who is now a very d'Egville of the art, is putting the young ladies through their steps in much the old manner, while the masculine novices are as clumsy as ever, and the young ladies smile at them and laugh at them and admire them in the same dear, old, foolish, human way that we shall never grow out of, thank Heaven! so long as this old earth endures! What a fine, elegant, gentle art, too, is that of Terpsichore! How it throws the reins to youth and brisks up and enlivens even the old fogeys and cronies amongst us! Oh dance, sirs, dance! hie forth without delay and go purchase the best seven-and-sixpenny town-made pumps procurable, and learn forthwith the "quadrille, minuet, gavotte, country dance, fandango, double hornpipe, and faringholkajingo," even like Mr. Augustus Cooper himself, and if you do not finish up by nearly marrying some fair coy Miss Billsmethi, well, sirs, there are others, and who can tell what time and opportunity may bring about?

For—well, well! these things will happen! Signor Billsmethi's Academy was not so genteel as we could wish, nor would the "beer in a can and the rum in a quart pot," that was fetched by Master Billsmethi and partaken of by the pupils on Mr. Cooper's first evening there, have perhaps quite won the approval of that superior and most august dame, Mrs. General, the daughter of a clerical dignitary in a cathedral town; but la! sirs, we are not all sons and daughters of archdeacons, and if the Academy was not *quite* genteel, they had at least very good fun there, flying into corners and diving among chairs and shooting out at the door, and it is my humble opinion that Mr. Augustus Cooper would have done very much better if he really had married Miss Billsmethi after all, for it would have shaken him up and brought him out and made a man of him, to say nothing

of making him a husband and saving his mother twenty pounds sterling.

Again I say, these things will happen and Cupid be found at his tricks even among the dancers. 'Tis true that the professors of the art will not lightly admit this, desirous as they are of being credited with serious views on the matter, but for myself, being not so much as cousin-german to a dancing-master, I have no scruple in making the avowal. Why, was it not at the dance at the Miss Crumptons' finishing school that Theodosius Butler renewed acquaintance with Miss Brook Dingwall—the adored Lavinia? "Edward!" she exclaimed on seeing the well-known nankeen legs, "Oh, Edward, is it you?" And Edward, sirs, it was, too, and Theodosius Butler likewise, and even the gifted author of the pamphlet entitled "Considerations on the Policy of Removing the Duty on Bees-wax," all represented most marvellously in one solitary, devoted gentleman in nankeen trousers. And so the lovers danced and talked and sighed through the evening, and finally ran away together and married in haste and repented at leisure on one hundred and fifty pounds a year, in a little house at Ball's Pond, Islington, in the vicinity of a brick-field.

You are quite right, Madam! No doubt they deserved to be miserable, the naughty bold creatures! But, after all, I have a soft place in my heart for the author of that work on bees-wax, and what is more, I believe that that treatise won for Theodosius Butler fame and fortune at last, and that as years rolled on he came to be looked on as a pioneer and leader in the great movement which resulted in the repeal of the duty on that most useful of commodities, and so gained the undying gratitude of all professors of Terpsichore within the realms of Britain. However that may be, the only duty that now remains is that of dancing on a bees-waxed floor, which obligation, ladies and young sirs, let us all fulfil religiously whenever occasion offers, and with such measure of agility, vigour and grace—not to speak of legs—as we may stand possessed of.

A BIOGRAPHY OF DICKENS FOR THE POCKET

MESSRS. SISLEY, LTD., have commenced the issue of a small series of biographies at sixpence each net. Among the first batch is one on Charles Dickens by Owen Ellison. We take it that the scheme of the series is to furnish brief outlines of the life and work of the subjects of each biography, and in doing this Mr. Ellison has succeeded admirably. Those who know their Forster will scarcely want this little book. But, on the other hand, those who want to learn the chief facts about the life-story of England's National novelist could not do better than possess themselves of this excellently written and well-balanced little work. It goes without saying that no one can write a book on the life of Dickens without being greatly indebted to John Forster's book. We do not, however, see any acknowledgment of Mr. Ellison's indebtedness to that classic volume anywhere in his pages, although the fact is patent on almost every page.

DICKENS AND WALWORTH

By FRANCIS FITCH

MR. ALLBUT, in his interesting little book, "London Rambles with Charles Dickens," gives Emmanuel Church as that in which Wemmick led Miss Skiffins to what Dickens calls (mixing a creed or two) "the Altar of Hymen." But I think I can prove that this is an error, as Emmanuel Church was not built until 1842—long after the period of the story. I believe the church in question to have been St. George's, Camberwell, which was built in 1822.

The extensive district of Walworth is divided into two parts by the Walworth Road, and its continuation the Camberwell Road, running irregularly southward from the Elephant and Castle. The western portion lies towards Kennington, and the eastern stretches away to the confines of the Old Kent Road. It is in this latter division that were to be found, fifty or sixty years ago, the back lanes, the wooden castles, the ponds and ditches, &c. I have in my mind's eye, somewhere between a dismal wilderness called Lock's Fields and a woeful waste called Walworth Common, a spot where, I believe, Wemmick's Castle stood, not more than a short walk from the "Skiffins'" shop, which is mentioned in a letter published in *The Dickensian* for last November. The walk southward to St. George's Church would be considerably under a mile, and the wedding party would cross East Lane, and the Albany Road and the Surrey Canal. This last was in my young days spanned by an iron foot-bridge—movable, I believe, to admit of the passage of barges. Dickens does not mention this canal, which is singular; but he may have purposely omitted reference to it. I remember, however, that a good deal of angling was done on its banks, close to the church, and may not this fact have suggested the queer fancy of Wemmick's fishing-rod? Having crossed the foot-bridge, the party would find themselves in front of St. George's Church. I paid a visit to this church a short time ago, after an absence of many years, and looked for the font. This is now a handsome modern structure of marble, but on enquiry I found that the old font had been removed to the vicarage garden, where, through the kindness of a young clergyman, I was permitted to see it. It is a big heavy stone vessel of classical design, and if it ever had a lid—which is doubtful—and if the lid corresponded in size and weight to the font itself, I can hardly believe that Wemmick would have been able to lift it off. Nor can I think that the pillars of the church are sufficiently slender to have made possible the operation of tugging on the Aged's gloves in the manner described. But perhaps these little extravagancies, popping into the author's mind suddenly when he let himself go, "yielding to his destiny" like Dick Swiveller in his expostulations with the single gentleman in Bevis Marks, hardly admit of serious criticism.

In an old engraving, showing this church as it appeared in the early twenties, I find the foot-bridge across the canal, and also a

windmill to the south of the church, which latter must have been cleared away before my time. This windmill, which seems to indicate an approach to a more open and cheerful country prospect than that which they had left behind them, the wedding party would pass on the road to Camberwell Green, where they would arrive in about ten minutes. Having crossed the Green, they would come to the "rising ground," which must be Denmark Hill, and nearly at the top they would find the "Fox under the Hill," now a modern public-house, but half a century ago an old wayside inn—a "pleasant little tavern," as Dickens calls it—and a favourite resort, especially on Sunday evenings in the summer, for the youthful population of Walworth and Camberwell. This, I think, must have been the hostel where the marriage feast was "provided by contract," and hilariously consumed.

WHERE WEMMICK MARRIED MISS SKIFFINS

Walworth seems to have had a melancholy fascination for Dickens. In his story of the "Black Veil," written in 1835 (*Sketches by Boz*), he gives a description of the neighbourhood as he imagined it to have been in the year 1800. It is to be remarked, by the way, that he speaks of the "back part" of Walworth, farthest from town—that is, the farthest from *his* part of town, which about that time (1835) was Furnival's Inn, and reference to a map will show that it was the eastern portion of Walworth thus indicated. Here is his picture of Walworth in 1800:—

"Striking off from the high road, his (the doctor's) way lay across a marshy common, through irregular lanes, with here and there a ruinous and dismantled cottage fast falling to pieces with decay and neglect. A stunted tree, or pool of stagnant water, roused into a sluggish action by the heavy rain of the preceding night, skirted the path occasionally, and now and then a miserable patch of garden ground, with a few old boards knocked together for a summer-house, and old palings imperfectly mended with stakes pilfered from the neighbouring hedges, bore testimony at once to the poverty of the inhabitants and the little scruple they entertained in appropriating the property of other people to their own use," &c.

All this was about as bad as it could be; but doubtless things must have somewhat improved before the establishment of the

wooden castle and garden and moat, which were the pride and joy of the worthy Wemmick and his Aged Parent.

As to the period of which *Great Expectations* treats, there are two bits of internal evidence which seem to me to fix it with tolerable certainty.

First, in Chapter XXXII., when Pip was about twenty years old, Wemmick takes him to Newgate, and introduces him to a man who has been condemned to death for coining. "He is sure to be executed on Monday," says Wemmick. Coining, in English law, comes under the head of Treason, and I find by Chambers's Encyclopædia (Art. "Executions") that there have been no executions in England for treason since 1820. Then, three years later, when Pip was twenty-three years old (see Chapter XXXIX.), the return of the convict takes place, followed within a few months by his death, and Wemmick's marriage. Certain Criminal Law Amendment Acts were passed in 1823, whereby the wholesale hangings which had long been a disgrace to our criminal procedure ceased. After that year executions for other crimes than that of murder became comparatively rare and exceptional, the latest (I quote the same authority, Art. "Forgery") being for forgery in 1837. Therefore the terrible scenes so graphically described by Dickens (see Chapter LVI.), when two-and-thirty prisoners were condemned to death in one day, could not, it seems, have occurred later than 1823.

Again, while Magwitch is in hiding at Chinks's Basin, Pip takes to sculling up and down the river, partly to disarm suspicion and partly to keep a furtive eye on his convict's place of concealment, he mentions pointedly, more than once (see Chapter XLVI. and Chapter XLVII.) "Old London Bridge," and he describes the "race" or fall of water at certain states of the tide, and how he learnt to "shoot" the Bridge when necessary. Also, how on a return journey from the lower part of the river, he could not get back through the "starlings" of the old Bridge, and so was compelled to leave his boat at a wharf near the Custom House, and finish his journey by land. Now, old London Bridge was demolished in the early twenties: the foundation stone of the new bridge was laid in 1825, and New London Bridge, as it stands at this day, was formally opened on August 1st, 1831.

I believe that the sad and solitary lad who came to London in 1822, and during the following year lodged in Lant Street while his father was in prison hard by, often wandered down into the dismal regions of Walworth, not a mile distant (like David Copperfield,* "looking at nothing but seeing everything"), and that when, long afterwards, he wrote this story, his mind was dwelling upon that unhappy period of his early life.

* *David Copperfield*, chap. XXVII.

DICKENS'S WOMEN CHARACTERS

By "OLD FLEET"

II

OF Mrs. Gargery it is well-nigh impossible to express one's opinion in strict Parliamentary language. She may not be so widely known as Mrs. Nickleby, but she is very frequently met with in the lower walks of life—walks which, be it remembered, Dickens had trodden. She seems to have no other object in life than to make everybody about her as unhappy as possible. It really seems as if she imagines she would be neglecting her duty if she did not go on the "rampage" at least once a day. And if she has a quiet, uncomplaining husband like Joe, she is all the happier. She will do any little thing that she knows will hurt his feelings. She often is a good housewife, but her very virtues become vices. We know what unhappiness Mrs. Gargery's love of cleanliness caused Joe and Pip. Believe me, Dickens had here a subject with which he was well acquainted. We are very apt to express warm and just indignation at the wife-beater, but a short experience of our Police Courts would cause many of us to hesitate more than we do now before expressing that indignation.

I have taken some of the more objectionable of Dickens's women characters, and I do not hesitate to claim that they are perfectly legitimate types. If my claim is acknowledged, then once more I say that their existence in his books is no evidence that he was unjust to women.

But let us look on the other side; and see what a procession we have. Here at the head walks Betsey Trotwood. Is she evidence of injustice to women? I hope not. She has always seemed to me to be an ornament to her sex—austere, perhaps, and eccentric, sometimes even hard-favoured, sometimes provocative of a smile, but withal the very embodiment of goodness. And at her side is David's "good angel"—Agnes. I am not sure but that there may be some truth in the criticism that she is an ideal, but at present that does not matter. Picture her as the cheery little housekeeper with the keys jangling at her side, recall her unselfish love for David, and whether she is an ideal or not, say if you think Dickens was unjust to women when he drew her. And here is the "Child of the Marshalsea," born to poverty and unhappiness, yet ever sacrificing self, and devoting her life to those around her. Ruth Pinch, too, is in the van. Does any of Dickens's books present to us a more charming and lovable character than this little woman, who is never so happy as when engaged in her household duties, and has made John Westlock the envy of every man who has met her and known her? And what of Lucy Manette, of whom it is written, "She was truest to them in the season of trial, as all the quietly loyal and good will always be"? What of Clara Peggotty and Dot Peerybingle and Polly Toodle, and Mrs. Lupin, and Miss La Creevy and Bella Wilfer, and Sophy Traddles? Was Dickens unjust to women when he gave us these characters? And last, can we forget Mrs. Todgers, that bony and hard-featured

lady, whose temper had been so sorely tried by "Commercial Gentlemen and gravy"? "The main chance," and we are told that "it was such a very small one in her case, that she might have been excused looking sharp after it," had taken a firm hold of Mrs. Todgers's attention, but we cannot forget that "in some odd nook in Mrs. Todgers's heart, up a great many steps, and in a corner easy to be overlooked, there was a secret door with *woman* written on the spring, which at a touch from Mercy's hand" flew wide open. This is the case with most of Dickens's women. Dickens said once that "a thoroughly wicked woman is wicked indeed," and he probably knew as well as all know that there is no greater truth, but I do not know of a female character in any book of his, no matter how bad she may be, whose heart does not contain a secret door with *woman* written on it. Nancy has fallen as low as a woman can fall, but in her heart that little door springs open at the magic touch. Even with Sally Brass it is hinted that there has been a passage in her life more or less deserving the name of romance, while both she and Miss Murdstone have the partially redeeming feature of sisterly love. And there can be no need to speak of the loving pity and charity with which he writes of Little Em'ly.

Once more we come back to my original proposition, that Dickens's women, good and bad alike, are types, and if my own observation counts for anything, they are wonderfully true types. As I have proceeded I have found it more and more difficult to think of any reasonable arguments in support of the criticism. There are two only that I can possibly conceive. One is the entirely illogical one that he gave us Mrs. Nickleby and Mrs. Varden. If we are to admit this as sound, then we have to be logical and say that Dickens ridiculed Christianity because he gave us Chadband; that he was unjust to lawyers because he gave us Uriah Heep, unjust to actors because he gave us Jingle, unjust to magistrates because he gave us Fang, unjust to the Jews because he gave us Fagin, and unjust to men because he gave us Pecksniff, Harold Skimpole, Jonas Chuzzlewit, Carker, and Bill Sikes. Such arguments would all be equally logical.

And the second argument that I can conceive—one more difficult to answer—is that most of Dickens's good women are not strong (except in goodness), but just pretty, sympathetic, and lovable—possibly sometimes just a little bit "dollish." For answer I can only repeat what I have said already—that Dickens was a man, writing, not, of course, with the knowledge that can come only from membership of the sex, but giving us a man's idea of what a good woman should be—telling us what are the qualities in a woman that a good man likes. He was writing entirely from the man's point of view. One writer has told us that the difference between Agnes and Dora is that the one appeals to the head and the other to the heart. That is true; and it hints at the root of the matter in hand—that the qualities that man loves most in women are those qualities of lovableness and sympathy, and pity and tenderness which appeal to the heart. Deep down in his heart every man has a horror of

the "blue stocking," a dread of the "clever" woman. He likes the woman to whom he can always go for sympathy, yet who he knows relies upon him and trusts her whole nature to him. Do not Ruth Pinch, Dot Peerybingle, Bella Wilfer, Lucy Manette, Kate Nickleby, belong to this type?

Mrs. Baillie-Saunders sums up Dickens's philosophy of women admirably, and it will be apt to end with a quotation from her book:—

"And to all the good women was granted immense power in the making of at least one man's life; you never get away from that sense of the constant abiding influence of women over men; you feel, after reading Dickens, the almost priestly sanctity of that sweet calling which belonged alike to lady and servant, angel, heroine, coquette, or hoyden, so long only as they were true and good, and held that most powerful weapon of influence, a loving heart.

"It is a perfect lesson beautifully preached, and one in which the teacher seems to bow before the taught and, in the eyes of the whole world, stoop and kiss her hand."

(*Concluded.*)

CHARACTERS FROM "DAVID COPPERFIELD"

Drawn by J. C. D'ARNAUD GERKENS

WE are able to reproduce in our present issue some very interesting sketches drawn by a Dutch artist to illustrate *David Copperfield*, executed evidently by a great admirer of Dickens's great work, out of sheer love of the book. The drawing, we understand, was never published, but a few lithographic copies were taken of it and distributed amongst friends. One of these was sent to Dickens himself in 1852, and the artist received the following letter from the novelist in acknowledgment of same:—

Tavistock House, London,
Tuesday, Nineteenth April, 1852.

DEAR SIR,—Your Consul-General has had the kindness to forward to me your most interesting and gratifying letter, and its accompanying representation, by your pencil, of some of the chief characters in *David Copperfield*.

I can honestly express to you my great admiration of the delicacy and tenderness with which you have illustrated my book. I have examined your drawings with great pleasure, and shall preserve these proofs of your sympathy with the creatures of my imagination, with great pride. Their conception is so quiet and gentle, and their execution so free, that they unite two qualities which I very rarely find in similar designs.

Accept my heartfelt thanks, and the assurance of my high estimation and regard.

Dear Sir,
Very faithfully yours,

Monsieur J. C. d'Arnaud Gerkens. CHARLES DICKENS.

Readers will be in agreement with Dickens's delightfully worded letter as to the merit of the artistic work. The drawing is admirable and delicate, and conveys the characteristics of the personages of the book very faithfully.

COMPLETION OF THE NATIONAL EDITION OF DICKENS'S WORKS

WITH the publication of Forster's Life of the Novelist, in two volumes, the "National" edition of Dickens's works is brought to a conclusion, and it may, without exaggeration, be said to be the most sumptuous edition ever published. From a typographical and bibliographical point of view no more satisfactory edition of the works of any writer has been published before, whilst, so far as the writings of Dickens are concerned, this is the most complete ever issued. Indeed, it may be safely said that nothing which the busy and voluminous writer ever penned has been omitted.

Another feature of the edition is the wealth of pictures which illustrate the volumes. These embrace all the familiar ones of the numerous cheap editions, printed from the original steel plates and woodblocks, as well as the numerous extra ones done during the novelist's lifetime, and which had his approval. These together number upwards of nine hundred, and in themselves make the edition well worth the price charged for it.

We have drawn attention on more than one occasion to the new writings which form a notable addition to the edition, and which have contributed towards the unique value of the publishers' undertaking. During the publication of the volumes at regular monthly intervals, the press and public generally have described the edition as the finest memorial an author could possibly have.

The edition is limited to 750 copies for this country and America combined, and already nearly the whole of that number has been sold. The price of a complete set is £21 net, but we do not doubt that there are many booksellers throughout the country who would be willing to supply them at the rate of two or more volumes per month to subscribers who would prefer that mode of purchasing them.

To those who desire to possess the finest and the most complete edition of Dickens's works ever published, and an edition which is likely to enhance in value, we unhesitatingly recommend them to acquire one of the few remaining sets before they are all exhausted.

EXTRA ILLUSTRATIONS TO "PICKWICK"

WE have received a copy of "A Portfolio of Twelve Original Illustrations" reproduced from drawings by A. B. Frost, to illustrate *The Pickwick Papers*, which Mr. A. J. Slatter, of 5, Broadhinton Road, Clapham, has just issued. All collectors of Dickensiana will be glad to possess these excellent drawings, carefully and well printed as they are on plate paper. A. B. Frost executed them some twenty-five years ago for an edition of the book, which is now very scarce, and for that reason this timely reprint will be very acceptable to those who have sought the book in vain. A. B. Frost also illustrated the *American Notes* in the "Household Edition" of the novelist's works, and these pictures were amongst the best contributed to that famous edition. The price of the portfolio is 5s. net. A limited edition on India paper is priced at 7s. 6d. net.

"MR. MODDLE"

[We have received the following from Mr. Emery, the well-known solicitor, of Broadstairs.]

LAST year, when Mr. W. P. Frith, R.A., and the writer were dining with Mr. Barry (President of the Isle of Thanet Branch of the Dickens Fellowship), at the residence of this gentleman, Bleak House, Broadstairs, the following interesting incident in the life of the great novelist was related by the veteran artist. It may, perhaps, be already known, but the writer had not previously heard it. The conversation had turned on the picture of "Dolly

MR. WILLIAM MILES GIVING HIS 25TH ANNUAL RECITAL AT THE BRADFORD MECHANICS' INSTITUTE. (See "When Found—," page 115.)

Varden," which was painted by Mr. Frith for Charles Dickens when residing at Broadstairs, and which now hangs in the novelist's study at Bleak House. Mr. Frith informed us that while he was painting the picture Charles Dickens came to see it, and, being very much pleased with the subject, asked who had sat for it. Mr. Frith replied that a Miss Turner had done so, adding that she was a very favourite model with artists just then. The word "model" at that date was a word recently adapted from the French, and was pronounced "mōdele" accordingly by precise people; of these Charles Dickens was one of the most precise. Mr. Frith, however, pronounced the word as it is pronounced to-day—"moddle." Charles Dickens retorted, "Oh, Mr. Frith, you call it 'moddle,' do you?" Mr. Frith related that he noticed the sar-

casm in Charles Dickens's tone, but deemed it wise to take no notice of the remark. At that time *Martin Chuzzlewit* was appearing as a serial, and drawing to its close. Within a few weeks Charles Dickens introduced to the public the elder Miss Pecksniff's *fiancé*, Mr. Moddle. Mr. Frith at once recognised that Dickens had made a side thrust at him over the slip in his pronunciation by giving the name to one of the most commiserated of the great novelist's characters.

POETICAL TRIBUTES TO CHARLES DICKENS

XLI

Call we for harp or song,
Accordant numbers, measured out, belong
Alone, we hear, to bard.
Let him this badge, for ages worn, discard;
Richer and nobler now
Than when the close trimm'd laurel markt his brow,
And from one fount his thirst
Was slaked, and from none other proudly burst
Neighing, the winged steed.
Gloriously fresh were those young days indeed!
Clear, if confined the view;
The feet of giants swept that early dew;
More graceful came behind,
And golden tresses waved upon the wind.
Pity and Love were seen
In earnest converse on the humble green;
Grief too was there, but Grief
Sat down with them, nor struggled from relief,
Strong Pity was, strong he.
But little Love was bravest of the three,
At what the sad one said
Often he smiled, the Pity shook her head.
Descending from their clouds,
The Muses mingled with admiring crowds;
Each had her ear inclined,
Each caught and spoke the language of mankind
From choral thraldom free. . . .
Dickens! didst thou teach *them* or they teach *thee*?

Walter Savage Landor.

From the *Examiner*, October 5, 1850.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CONVIVIALISM IN DICKENS

Sir,—Mr. Nicholson's letter is of interest as affording an opportunity of protest, in deprecation of the fallacies of ultra partisanship.

It should be understood that I am myself an abstainer (unpledged). Dr. Madden's article quoted in the *Alliance News*, is just a sample of the untrustworthiness of one-sided opinion—always to be carefully regarded *cum grano salis*, in avoidance of what Tennyson has rightly labelled "the falsehood of extremes."

The Doctor says that the good things of the table "were his chief delight." We of the Dickens Fellowship know much better than that, believing the chief delight of the Master consisted in that higher festivity of heart and spirit, of which "the good cheer" spoken of was but the subsidiary concomitant. A fair-minded study will show that Ruth's beef-steak pudding, that dish "so unalloyed and perfect," the door-step meal of tripe and potatoes eaten by Toby with so keen a relish, the Cratchits' Christmas dinner, and the many household festivals described—with provision of an age gone by, plain, prime and plentiful—are "the outward and visible sign" of the inward and spiritual.

In effect, the grace of cheerful, high-minded and genial sympathy (so happily referred to by Dick Swiveller as "the fire of soul, kindled at the taper of conviviality") is ever clearly discernible; while "the feast of reason" supersedes (as intended by the author) the satisfaction of mere animal enjoyment.

Charles Dickens is not alone a criminal in this regard; he has incurred righteous censure in good company; for it may be remembered that The Master whom he reverenced was, in His time, reproached by the "unco' guid" as "a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber."

It is edifying to observe how the inference of the worthy Doctor is educed from half a statement of fact. The dinner referred to in *American Notes* was by no means a specimen of his habitual régime; it was the farewell dinner of self and friends at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, and of course comprised, *par exception*, "all the slight etcetera usually included" on such an occasion.

Mr. John Forster, his intimate friend and biographer, insistently refers to the life-long regular, neat and orderly habits of our "hero"; habits altogether at variance with the ways and methods of intemperance. And in special reference to his descriptive penchant for the good things of this life, Forster remarks that it was *the sentiment* of the matter which he approved, rather than the actuality. Dickens, speaking personally (see *Seven Poor Travellers*) has said, "I could be merry and wise myself, and had been known, at a pinch, to keep others so."

If a temperance object lesson may be recommended—specially for young men—Chapter 24 of *David Copperfield* will be worth consideration. I do not think our friend Mr. Nicholson need be much concerned; the new *American Notes* now quoted are but the echoes of an old story, long ago discredited and disproved. In all exercise of humility and liberality, let us clear our minds of Honey-thunder cant.

Yours faithfully,
ROBT. ALLBUT.

14, Fairmount Road, Brixton, April 10th, 1908.

MR. FRANK SPEAIGHT IN AMERICA

SIR,—Mr. Frank Speaight has come to our little city, and gone, and I want the staff of the *Dickensian* to know something of the delightful entertainment he gave us in *David Copperfield*. Everybody, like Oliver Twist, wanted more. Since Mr. Speaight's engagement here there will certainly be a much larger reading of Dickens than ever before, and the event will probably lead to the establishing of a Dickens Fellowship in Kokomo. I am gratified to know that Mr. Speaight also had great success in Chicago. Crowded houses heard him nightly at Chicago University. It is the wish of many that his visits to America will continue. Those who heard Dickens himself surely had no advantage over the present generation other than that of seeing the great author.

I followed Mr. Speaight to Chicago for his second series of readings there. Night after night added to his popularity. In reading the *Carol* he had to

respond to encores after each stave, and at the end was called out four times. This man's genius is bound to be known; the American people appreciate him, and his future success in America is assured.

Yours, very truly,
H. W. VROOMAN.

Kokomo, Indiana, March 25th, 1908.

"OVER THE WATER TO CHARLIE"

SIR,—I have recently come across a cutting, under the above head, from some provincial journal, possibly a late issue of *The Eatanswill Gazette*, which reads as follows:—

"HE WANTED TO KNOW."—RIGHT QUERY IN WRONG PLACE.

INTENDING TOURIST (*at station*).—"Where do I book for Alpine Dickens-Land? July 14th, isn't it?"

CRUSTY CLERK.—"How the Dickens should I know? Try Inquiry Office."

I. T.—"I've general details; all but—"

C. C.—"Then go to Allbut, and find out; don't come bothering here." (Shuts down window.)

I. T.—"Eh? Where? What?"

COURTEOUS BYSTANDER.—"I think our friend means R. ALLBUT, 14, *Fairmount Road, Brixton*, Fellowship Vice-President, you know; or MASTER HUMPHREYS' CLOCK may be consulted (*Olinda, Longsight, Manchester*) for hour of starting and special minutes of Trip. Correct movement guaranteed."

I. T.—"I'll tick that off. Best thanks."

Can any correspondent explain? To oblige,
Dear Sir, Your inquiring and admiring reader,
B. WILDRED KAY WHITE.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

NOTICE TO SECRETARIES.

Reports of meetings should reach the Editor by the 18th of each month to ensure insertion. But it will be a matter of GREAT CONVENIENCE *if Secretaries will send their reports immediately after the meetings have been held, and not wait until the time limit. Address c/o Publishers.*

CHARITABLE AND NEEDLEWORK GUILD.—The third annual bazaar of the Charitable and Needlework Guild was held on March 27th, at St. Bride's Institute, Bride Lane, Fleet Street. Canon Benham performed the opening ceremony, at which there was a good attendance, including Miss Georgina Hogarth, Mrs. H. F. Dickens, Miss Elaine Dickens, Mr. H. Snowden Ward, Mr. B. W. Matz, Mr. E. P. Haslam, etc. The numerous stalls were well stocked, and tastefully arranged, and the energetic stall-holders did excellent business. There were many special attractions. Mr. C. Van Noorden had charge of an interesting little exhibition of Dickensiana wherein were displayed many quaint and rare items. The prize competitions were very popular and very interesting. In the gentlemen's hat-trimming competition Mr. Frank Staff proved himself a man of taste, and easily carried off the first prize. Miss Kathleen Marriott carried off the ladies' prize in the nail-driving competition, and Miss Harris in the wood-sawing competition. These did not exhaust the list of prize competitions. In addition there were excellent concerts at intervals, and these were

contributed to by Miss Edith Tyrell, Mr. T. Le Ryt, Mr. Leicester Romayne, Mr. Willoughby Matchett, Mr. Chas. Leftwich, Mr. Frank Staff, &c.; Miss Winifred M. Nash very kindly acting as accompanist. In the afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Edward Lucas, the famous Dickens sketch artists, who have been appearing at London halls recently, very kindly appeared, and gave two of their delightful sketches. They selected a couple of scenes from *Martin Chuzzlewit*, introducing old Martin, Jonas and Mercy Pecksniff, and the famous scene between Dick Swiveller and the Marchioness from *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Both sketches were excellent, and were heartily enjoyed. Special reference may be made of Mrs. Lucas's impersonation of the Marchioness, which was splendid. It may be said that the bazaar, like its two predecessors, was a success, and Miss Emilie M. Miniken, the hard-working secretary of the guild, is entitled to warm congratulations on the fact. If someone took away a lady's umbrella by mistake, the Hon. Secretary would be glad to receive it back and return it to the owner.

BIRMINGHAM.—On March 20th a debate took place on *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. The affirmative—that Edwin Drood died at the hands of his Uncle Jasper—was taken by Mr. Edward J. Timings, and the negative by Mr. A. J. Webb. Mr. Timings gave very conclusive evidence, as he submitted, not only from what the author hinted at in the half-told story, but on the statements made by Mr. John Forster (who had it from Dickens himself), by Sir Luke Fildes (who illustrated the book), and various other reliable sources. Mr. Webb contended that it was not Dickens's intention for Edwin Drood to die, but that he escaped from his uncle's attempt upon his life; and that he afterwards turned up in the disguised character of Datchery. An interesting discussion followed, in which a number of members took part, and after the chairman's summing up a vote was taken, when the affirmative was declared carried by a majority of two. Mr. William Farrow presided.

BLACKHEATH.—On March 28th Miss Edith Sayers read a paper on "Dickensian Courtships." Interspersing her remarks with some well-chosen extracts, Miss Sayers sketched the love affairs of lovers successful and unsuccessful, from Guppy to Tommy Traddles, and from the melancholy Moddle to Mr. Tim Linkinwater. Mr. J. E. Palmer occupied the chair, and during an interlude and at the end of the paper Miss Watson Wills sang with power and expression.

BRIGHTON.—On April 4th, 1908, at the Y.M.C.A., Old Steine, Mr. Francis J. Gauntlett, the indefatigable hon. secretary, gave a recital, assisted by Miss Lilian Smith, as vocalist, with Miss Alona Russell Davies at the piano. Mr. Henry Davey, the President, took the chair. Mr. Gauntlett's selections were from *Dombey and Son*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Bleak House*, and *Barnaby Rudge*. The hall was well filled with an enthusiastic audience, and vocalist and reciter were several times recalled. Mr. Davey, in a speech calling attention to the varied powers of Mr. Gauntlett shown in the variety of the selections rendered by him, extended the thanks of the whole meeting to him, and also to Miss Lilian Smith and Miss Alona Russell Davies.

On April 10th Mr. G. W. Davis gave a paper entitled "From Faerie Queene to Little Nell." The lecturer used earlier literature merely for the purposes of contrast and comparison in the endeavour to show reasons for Dickens's pre-eminence as a novelist. Mr. J. J. Button presided.

BRIXTON.—On March 30th, at the usual place of meeting, a sterling programme was provided, the evening's engagements being arranged by Mr. James Skeen. The chair was taken by Mr. R. Allbut. An original paper was given by Mr. J. Skeen on "The Imaginary Creations of Dickens," the reader explaining that he did not refer to the many

ordinary types of humanity, more or less founded by the author on personalities of everyday life and experience, but to the more fanciful children of his genius—dreams, ghosts, and hallucinations. The study evinced much thoughtful consideration. Mr. H. Skeen contributed his quota to the general enjoyment by an admirable paper anent "The Speeches of Dickens," with illustrative reminders, commanding full appreciation. The ladies also very ably assisted. Mrs. Jolly gave a fine reading of "The Cratchits' Christmas Dinner," and Miss L. Skeen enhanced the pleasure of the proceedings by the singing of two songs.

On April 13th an enjoyable evening's entertainment was provided by Miss Kathleen Marriott, whose connection with the Fellowship Dramatic Club stood her in good stead, for the inimitable Toots (Mr. Frank Staff) and the distinguished author of "Dolly Varden" (Mr. Walter Dexter) contributed humorous recitations, whilst she herself favoured the audience with another example of her histrionic powers in a recital from *Our Mutual Friend*. All the songs were excellently rendered, Miss Jessie Smith and Mr. Vivian Elmslie particularly delighting the company with the more serious items, and Mr. George Brown contributing the funny ones. So good were all these artistes that an encore was demanded in every case. The chair was occupied by Mr. B. W. Matz, who was supported by Mr. J. W. T. Ley, Mr. C. Van Noorden and Mr. Sidney Marriott.

DUBLIN.—On March 19th a paper written by Mr. Jack Shaw was read to a crowded meeting by Mr. Collins, chairman, entitled, "Are Dickens's Female Characters True to Life?" The paper, which was remarkable for its lucidity, thorough knowledge and mastery of the subject, and real insight into human nature, initiated an instructive discussion, which was ably conducted by the Misses Brereton, Hogg, and Slyne, and Messrs. Hornan, Smith, Collins, and Prescott.

FOREST GATE.—The last meeting of the present session took place on April 9th, in the form of a concert-recital, the elocutionist being Mr. John Toscenie. The musical part of the programme was provided by members. A large and appreciative audience gathered in the Earlham Hall, and every item was received with great applause. Mr. Toscenie was in splendid form, each recital being excellently rendered. Perhaps he was best in "On Strike," by Charles Pond, and "A Will and a Way," by W. W. Jacobs. Miss Florence Dickinson received quite an ovation for her charming singing, and Master F. Watkins delighted the audience with two finely rendered violin solos. Other members who contributed to the evening's harmony were Madame Lena Michelbacher, Madame Lily Davies, Miss May Cully, and Miss Victoria Cox. The President, Mr. Ernest Gray, presided in his usual genial way, and votes of thanks to him and to the artistes terminated one of the most successful meetings ever held by this branch.

An outing to Rochester on Whit Monday is being organised, and to this all members of the Fellowship are invited. Full particulars will be announced in a future number of *The Dickensian*.

GLOUCESTER.—The second session of the Branch was brought to a successful conclusion last month, when an unusually interesting meeting was held at Northgate Mansions. The President (Mr. H. Godwin Chance) was in the chair. The meeting continued the discussion on *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Mrs. Garnham opening with a reading dealing with the domestic economy of Ruth and Tom Pinch. This was followed by readings by Mr. John W. Barnett and Mr. Jukes, the respective subjects being the American experiences of Martin Chuzzlewit and the dinner at Mrs. Todgers' boarding-house. In the course of the discussion, in which several members took part, Mr. Spender raised the point as to whether the Wiltshire village in which Pecksniff lived had ever been actually located, and

the general opinion was that it had not. Mr. James Bruton, in the course of some interesting observations, dealt with the nomenclature of Dickens, and pointed out that the names of many of his best-known characters were still to be found in the London Directory. In closing the meeting, the President referred to the successful session which he had had the pleasure of presiding over, and expressed the hope and belief that the Fellowship had been established in Gloucester on a permanent basis.

HALIFAX.—This newly formed Branch held its first general meeting on April 2nd. The Formative Committee had done good work since its appointment, some five weeks ago, and the Society may now be said to be well and successfully launched, with an initial membership of about forty. The Society has been happy in its choice of President. Dr. Branson is an enthusiastic Dickensian, and he will not be a president of the figure-head type, but an active worker for the Fellowship ideals. The officers elected were:—President, Dr. Branson; secretary, Mr. E. A. Jones; assistant secretary, Mr. P. Kaye; treasurer, Miss Green; committee, Messrs. F. Marshall, E. Midgley, W. H. Proctor, and Thompson, Mrs. Shillito, Mrs. Forbes, and Miss Pattinson.

HASTINGS.—The fifth annual children's evening of the Branch was held at the Royal Concert Hall recently, in aid of the St. Paul's Crêche. There was a good attendance, and an excellent programme was submitted and contributed to by the "Wells Family" Orchestra, Master Jack Weatherley, the Misses Bessie Hobbes and Ivy Weatherley, Master Willie Watkins, Miss Ena Horsey, Master Roland Kerswell, Miss Kathleen Collins, and the Misses Marjorie Beartup and Violet Paine. Part II. of the programme was entitled "Marjorie's Dream," and was a great credit to the author, Miss Maude G. Tyler, and Mrs. L. Thomas and Mr. Philip Goepel, who composed the music. The scene was the library, and the time the evening of February 7th, Charles Dickens's birthday. The characters were admirably taken.

HULL.—At the fortnightly meeting the members joined in an animated discussion on the last complete book that Dickens wrote, *Our Mutual Friend*. A good number expressed judgment on the work, and, although favourable comments predominated, some widely different opinions were expressed. The members who gave illustrative readings and who joined in the debate were Miss Ives, Miss Norris, Messrs. J. M. Borrow, J. H. Brown, F. Craft, W. H. Eastman, T. Lehair, J. H. Noble, and the President (Mr. H. B. Browne).

The Rev. J. G. Patton was the lecturer at the following meeting, and had for his subject Dickens's impressions of America, as presented in *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Mr. Patton displayed an intimate personal knowledge of American life and customs. In noting, at a glance, human characteristics and foibles, said Mr. Patton, Dickens was as sure as he was swift—he was probably the greatest human observer the world had ever known. Dickens had a clear vision and a Kodak mind, that could gather up all aspects of the view in the same time that old, lumbersome, literary photographers would be selecting a spot on which to place their tripod. Dickens's opinions of American cities were analysed by the lecturer, and, to illustrate the rivalry amongst the cities as regards the appearance of their streets, Mr. Patton related how a resident of Philadelphia told a Boston man that Boston was not nearly so well laid out as Philadelphia. "Perhaps not," responded the Bostonian, "but it will be as well laid out when it's as dead!"

Mr. Holgate Ellison has been compelled to resign the post of Hon. Secretary, and Mr. G. E. Tindal has been elected in his place.

LEEDS.—At a meeting held at the Church Institute on April 6th, Mr.

Frank Kidson, the hon. secretary, read a paper entitled "The Domesticities of Dickens." Mr. Kidson dealt with some of the many and varied pictures of home life which Dickens has portrayed in his novels. Dickens, he said, was eminently a domestic man. His home life, when surrounded by his family, was a perfect example of simple happiness. The home life of his boyhood had offered a marked contrast to this, and it was not to be wondered at that, with such experiences of both kinds, his domestic pictures were drawn with vigour and freshness. The Wardle family in *Pickwick* was charmingly drawn, and very pleasant to read about. The domesticities which surrounded the family life of the Snagsbys, the Jellybys, Sampson Brass, and Quilp, were gone into by Mr. Kidson, who also mentioned how delightfully written were the passages which showed the Tetterby family at home. Extracts were read from *Dr. Marigold*, *The Haunted Man*, *Our Mutual Friend*, and other works bearing on the paper.

LIVERPOOL.—On March 3rd one of the vice-presidents, Dr. C. A. Hill, gave a lecture on "Cancelled and Suppressed Dickens Plates." His lecture was listened to with great interest, the more so because the lecturer had brought with him several of the first editions which he spoke of. The secretary, Mr. James Watkins, also gave a paper on "George Eliot."

The Rev. H. D. Roberts lectured on March 17th on "The Ethics of Dickens." After making a comparison between the styles of Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot, he proceeded to show that the keynote of Dickens's work was his love of humanity. The secretary referred to the social work which the Branch had undertaken, and urged the necessity for it. Mrs. Helsby and Messrs. Bayliss, Ramsden, and Wallace contributed to the discussion.

LUDDENDEN.—The session of the Branch was brought to a successful close on Tuesday, March 31st, when a public social gathering was held in St. James's U.M.C. school. Mr. H. M. Greenwood, President, said the Luddenden Fellowship began all alone, but another was being formed in Halifax, which he had no doubt would succeed as people began to realise what benefit and pleasure could be derived. He thought they had been as fortunate as any branch in finding in their midst such exponents of Dickens as they had had. Miss Lizzie Yates gave a short selection from the *Christmas Carol*. Then, attired as a workhouse nurse, "twenty-five years a widow," Miss Yates represented Mrs. Corney, and Mr. John Clay (Luddenden Foot), attired in a real beadle's costume, made love to Mrs. Corney, as Mr. Bumble, just as is shown in *Oliver Twist*. The hearty applause was well merited. Other items included "Sam Weller's Evidence," a reading from *Pickwick*, by Mr. J. Schofield; and the short recital "Dickens in Camp," Bret Harte's famous appreciation of Dickens, admirably delivered and explained by Mr. W. Farmer.

MANCHESTER.—The closing meeting of the sixth session was held on Friday, April 3rd. Mr. Albert Nicholson presided over a large audience. Mr. Arthur Humphreys, hon. secretary, read the annual report, which showed the present membership to be 208. Thirty new members had joined during the year. Mr. Frank Holden, hon. treasurer, reported a small balance in hand. Mr. John Harwood was by acclamation elected president for the ensuing year, in succession to Sir W. H. Bailey, who, by rule, retires, and to whom a vote of thanks was accorded for his services. Mr. Humphreys and Mr. Holden were reappointed to their respective offices, and the vice-presidents and council were also elected. An interesting entertainment followed. Miss Ethel Canning sang, and Mr. J. W. Smith gave a spirited rendering of "Richard Doubledick." A sketch entitled "The Mendicant's Bride," an adaptation by Mr. G. F. Gadd from *Our Mutual Friend*, was well given by Mrs. Whitehead, Miss Kinnell, and Messrs. G. F. Gadd and H. Whitehead. A pleasant sur-

prise for the audience was the visit of Mr. Bransby Williams, who, on the invitation of Mr. J. Cuming Walters, looked in on Manchester Dickensians between his "turns" at the Hippodrome. Mr. Williams had a cordial reception, and greatly delighted those present by giving three character sketches—"Micawber," "Uriah Heep," and "Dan'l Peggotty"—and, by way of an encore, a recitation, "Devil-may-care." Mr. Williams was heartily thanked for his kindness, and was elected a vice-president of the Branch.

PHILADELPHIA.—The most interesting meeting of the year was held on April 8th, at the Widener Library. Mr. John Thomson, the newly elected President, occupied the chair, and opened the meeting with an address full of wit and encouragement. A committee was appointed to consider the removal of Elwell's bronze statue of "Dickens and Little Nell" from its present location in Clarke Park to a more prominent position on the new park boulevard. A second committee was named to make arrangements for placing a tablet on the building in which Charles Dickens gave his public readings in Philadelphia. The literary programme began with an interesting paper by Mrs. T. O. Woodward on "Matrimony as viewed by Mr. Weller, Senr., and Others," in which the domestic affairs of Mrs. Varden, Mrs. Jellyby, Mrs. Micawber, Dora Copperfield, Mrs. Snagsby, and others were brought to view, with, of course, the inimitable observations of the elder Weller. The second number was the reading, by Mr. Leigh Mitchell Hodges, of a humorous account of the ball given in honour of Mr. and Mrs. Dickens on their visit to New York in 1842. The concluding number was a most entertaining paper by Miss L. H. Haeseler on "The Teachers of Dickens."

SHEFFIELD.—The last smoking concert of the session was held at the Royal Victoria Station Hotel, on April 3rd. About 400 persons were present. Councillor J. Benson presided, and was supported by Mr. E. Callum. An excellent musical programme was sustained. Songs were contributed by Miss M.V. Savage, Miss Jessie Marshall, Miss Amy Nicholson, and Messrs. W. Oxley, A. Muscroft, E. B. Pearson, T. J. Smallwood, A. Waite, Harry Heath, and violin solos by Miss Gladys Hayes. A recitation was given by Mr. Bert Sharp, and a pianoforte solo by Miss Elsie Brindley. Mr. Charles Callum was the accompanist.

The last monthly meeting of the session was held on April 10th in the Cutlers' Hall, the chairman of the council, Mr. G. W. Parker, presiding. Mr. Padmore contributed an interesting paper on "The Fame of Dickens." Mrs. T. H. Warskett gave a sketch, "At the Garden Party"; Mrs. F. H. Bagnall recited "Mr. Pickwick's Advice to Mr. Magnus"; and Miss Helen Roberts gave a reading from *Edwin Drood*.

TORONTO.—The subject of the March meeting was *Dombey and Son*, Vice-president F. M. Bell-Smith occupying the chair. Over 500 members attended. Mr. J. L. Hughes spoke on the educational side of *Dombey and Son*, with special reference to the cramming system, and the evils resulting therefrom. At the close of his address Mr. Hughes exhibited the brush pen-wiper used by Dickens for many years. This interesting and valuable souvenir of the author was recently presented to Mr. Hughes by Miss Georgina Hogarth. Miss Blanche Walter contributed a reading, which was very much enjoyed. At the Guild Hall, on the 2nd of April, Mrs. Sidney Dunn, Vice-President of the Hamilton Branch, gave a recital of scenes from *David Copperfield*, the book of the evening, in a manner that held the closest attention and won the hearty applause of the large audience. Madame Bessie Bonsall contributed two solos, and Master Campbell Weeks rendered violin selections.

WEST LONDON.—At the meeting in the Lecture Hall, Ealing, on March 26th, Captain Higginson kindly took the chair. The programme

commenced with Mr. Davies graphically reading the Returning Home of Mrs. Dowler, Miss Watson beautifully rendered the Passing of Sydney Carton, and Mr. Romayne read his delightfully humorous paper on Mr. Lillyvick. Miss Brinckman was capital as Nancy in the interview with Rose Maylie. She also dramatically gave the Flight of Bill Sikes, and her own poem, The Convict's Tribute to Charles Dickens. Mr. Hilton read the charming story of Richard Doubledick, and Miss Davies cleverly recited Tim Linkinwater with Miss La Crevy.

TOTTENHAM.—At the Earlsmead Council School, on April 4th, a concert was given at which Mr. Sydney Ewart presented the following characters from the works of Dickens:—Uriah Heep, Mr. Micawber, Daniel Quilp, the Grandfather from the *Old Curiosity Shop*, and Wackford Squeers. Mr. Sydney Ewart's representations were given in a most refined and delightful manner, and his "make-up" was excellent.

DICKENSIANA MONTH BY MONTH

BOOKS, &c.

The Life of Charles Dickens. By John Forster. 2 vols. Completion of the "National" Edition of Dickens's works, making 40 vols. London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd. £21 the set.

Portfolio of 12 Original Drawings by A. B. Frost for "Pickwick." London: A. J. Slatter. 5s. net and & 7s. 6d. net.

MAGAZINE AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLES.

"The Great Boz Ball." By W. P. Beazeel. *The Index* (Pittsburg, U.S.A.), March.

"Dickens and Gravesend." By Alex J. Philip. Illus. *Home Counties Magazine*, April.

"Debentured Widows: Sairey Gamp on their Duty to 'The Trade.'" By Harold Begbie. *Daily Chronicle*, March 31.

"Shade of Dickens." Action in King's Bench Division. *Morning Advertiser*, March 25, and other papers.

"The Whole Hogs." By Chas. Dickens. *Yorkshire Weekly Post*, March 21.

"At the Sign of St. Paul's: Andrew Lang on a Dickens Problem." *Illustrated London News*, March 21.

"Mr. William Miles, the Original of Mr. Tope." Illus. *Lloyd's Weekly News*, March 29.

"George Borrow and Charles Dickens." *T.P.'s Weekly*, March 27.

"Notes and Gleanings: Dickens and Licensing Bill." *Norfolk Weekly Standard*, March 27.

"England and Caricature." By G. K. Chesterton. *Daily News*, March 28.

"Sotto Voce." By John Ayscough. *Academy*, March 28.

"The Art of Dickens." Reply to above. By Arthur Machen. *Academy*, April 11.

"The Cycle of Knowlege: a Dawdle in Dickens-Land." *T.P.'s*, April 10.

DIARY OF DICKENS MEETINGS

MAY

1. Birmingham Branch: Annual Meeting.
2. Brighton Branch: Ladies' Evening at Steine House, at 8.
11. Brixton: Conversazione at Independent Church, at 8.
12. West London: Dickens Character Competition at Lecture Hall, Ealing.
20. Southampton Branch: Annual Meeting.

ALBION STREET, BROADSTAIRS, SHOWING THE ALBION HOTEL

[*Photo by T. W. Tyrrell*

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